

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

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financial risks Gilgit-Baltistan  
POK Land Reforms Act  
Mangla Power Station  
Insurance Ordinance  
agriculture Karakoram  
provisional provincial status  
Highway



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## Contents

### Political Developments

- GB without rights
- Mushaal expresses concern over the health condition of Yasin Malik
- Wani seeks independent probe into mass rape incidents committed by 'occupation forces in occupied Kashmir'
- Rally holds to condemn 'killer' Modi's visit to 'occupied Kashmir'
- KKH partially reopened as snow, and landslides disrupt life in GB
- Modi's Jammu visit akin to rubbing salt on Kashmiris' wounds: Rahmani
- PML-N's Kashmir chapter hopeful of forming govt in 'AJK', Gilgit
- Hurriyat leaders, organisations demand an independent probe into the Kunan-Poshpora mass rape

### Economic Developments

- Mangla power station: WAPDA proposes depositing Sales Tax to 'AJK'
- High-level meeting on land reforms chaired by GB Chief Minister
- The Struggles of Shimshal: Balancing Rumors, Mining, and Reality!
- NICL offers to Assume Financial Risks of 'AJK' State-owned Assets

### Vernacular Urdu Media

- GB's constitutional status must be determined: Agha Ali
- Mass protests and rallies across 'AJK' against PM Modi's visit to 'Occupied Kashmir'
- Prime Minister of 'AJK' denounced the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'IOJK'
- India is using Kashmiri women's dignity as a weapon of war: Speakers at a Seminar

## Political Developments

### **GB without rights**

*Dawn, 18 February 2024*

MOHAMMAD Hussain, who hails from Ghanche in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and has been working in a household in Lahore, watched in despair as the whole of Pakistan, except for his own fellow Baltis, went to vote for their preferred candidates in the 8 February election. Hussain asked his boss why his folks were not allowed to vote. He could not understand the complex answer to this simple question. GB's political fate has been hanging in the balance for the past seven decades, even though on the eve of partition, the people of Gilgit Agency and many other northern areas, who had hardly accepted the suzerainty of the Dogra rulers, expressed their wish to join Pakistan. However, the political fate of these territories was linked to the dispute between India and Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir. Ever since, the territories of Gilgit, Skardu, Diamer, Astore, Ghanche, Ghizer, and Hunza have been under Pakistan's administrative control.

Their people join the civil and armed services, carry Pakistan national identity cards, and for all practical purposes are Pakistanis. Yet, they cannot join our National Assembly and Senate to participate in Pakistan's governance. Successive governments have tried to enhance GB's administrative autonomy, particularly in 2009 and 2018, but have fallen well short of what the people of GB have

repeatedly demanded: full integration into Pakistan. In January 2019, the Supreme Court extended its jurisdiction to GB, creating an anomaly, because constitutionally GB was not a part of Pakistan. In March 2021, the GB Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution demanding provisional provincial status with representation in the constitutional bodies of Pakistan. Further, GB residents feel that while Pakistan took from the resources of GB, it was reluctant to give it constitutional status.

There is a political consensus in Pakistan to admit GB as a provisional province. Under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the Sartaj Aziz Committee recommended in 2016 giving GB a provisional provincial status. Prime Minister Imran Khan's government had also announced in 2020 that GB would be granted a provisional provincial status. And yet, the status quo is so hard to break, mainly because the integration of these territories into Pakistan could undermine the UNSC resolutions calling for determining the political fate of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir through a plebiscite under UN auspices. So, for nearly 76 years, the people of GB have been waiting for the plebiscite. Is such a plebiscite likely to happen anytime soon?

The ground reality is that India has consistently and brazenly refused to implement UNSC resolutions on the Kashmir dispute. The Modi government went a step further to annex the 'occupied territory' in

August 2019 and is currently engaged in demographic and electoral engineering to change the Muslim-majority status of 'India-occupied Kashmir' in blatant violation of the UNSC resolutions. However, given India's large market and strategic partnership with the US, there is no real pressure from the international community on India to fulfill its obligations under the resolutions. So, in practical terms, the prospects of India agreeing to hold the plebiscite are extremely low. If that is the ground reality, then the people of GB wonder how much longer they have to wait to get their right to self-determination recognised.

Understandably, integrating GB could have implications for Pakistan's legal position on the Kashmir dispute. Hence, the suggestion has been to keep the integration provisional and subject to the final settlement of the Kashmir dispute. However, other factors must not be ignored. Firstly, the people of GB have a right to self-determination, which is a fundamental right that overrides other considerations. Secondly, given the salience of our relationship with Beijing, GB provides a vital geographical link to China and is central to the implementation of CPEC.

Formally integrating GB will give full constitutional protection to CPEC-related and other international investments in GB. Thirdly, ignoring the consistently expressed desire of the people of GB to join Pakistan is creating a sense of alienation in GB, which could

be exploited by the detractors of Pakistan. As it is, BJP leaders in India have sharpened their rhetoric of claim on these territories. Given these arguments, it is a strategic imperative that GB be integrated into Pakistan as a provisional province without further delay and its people be recognised as citizens of Pakistan with full rights admissible under the Constitution of Pakistan, pending a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1815150>

### **Mushaal expresses concern over the health condition of Yasin Malik**

*The Nation, 19 February 2024*

Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has vociferously condemned Indian authorities' inhumane behavior towards her husband, Mohammad Yasin Malik. She has said that Yasin Malik's health has deteriorated to an alarming level after he stopped taking medicines in protest of the inhuman behavior of authorities for their delaying tactics to take him to the hospital for proper medical treatment, despite court orders. Mushaal said that the expired and outdated pacemaker implanted in him had now become ineffective, endangering his life. She said that in addition to his heart problems, Yasin Malik was also suffering from a kidney ailment. His body weight had also dropped to a great extent, which was a great cause of concern.

Mushaal said that as per reports, the health of Muhammad Yasin Malik was deteriorating speedily due to the lack of proper medical treatment in Tihar Jail. She said that just two weeks ago, his mother had approached a court in Delhi to draw the court's attention towards the deteriorating health condition of her son and over concerns of the lack of interest of the authorities towards his health. In her plea to the court, his mother also expressed her readiness to bear the expenses of her son's treatment.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/19-Feb-2024/mushaal-expresses-concern-over-health-condition-of-yasin-malik>

### **Wani seeks independent probe into mass rape incidents committed by occupation forces in occupied Kashmir**

*Daily Parliament Times, 19 February 2024*

Hurriyat leader and Vice Chairman Jammu Kashmir National Front (JKNF), Altaf Hussain Wani has demanded an independent and international probe into mass-rape incidents committed by the 'Indian occupation forces' in the Indian-held territory of Jammu Kashmir. In a statement issued, Wani said that the 'occupation forces' deployed in the restive region have been involved in heinous crimes. Use and abuse of power, harassment, humiliation, and sexual abuse, he said, were among the dirtiest war tactics the Indian army has been using to suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination. He claimed that being a

vulnerable segment of society, the Kashmiri women have been the worst victims of Indian belligerence. Referring to the incident of Kunan and Poshpora mass rape, the Hurriyat leader said that the horrific incident was a big blot on the face of Indian democracy and the state that has been using rape as a weapon of war against Kashmiris. The brutality Kashmiri women were subjected to on the dreadful night of 23 February 1991 finds no place in human history, he said, adding that despite the passage of 33 years, justice continues to elude the victims.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/02/19/wani-seeks-independent-probe-into-mass-rape-incidents-committed-by-occupation-forces-in-occupied-kashmir/>

### **Rally holds to condemn 'killer' Modi's visit to 'occupied Kashmir'**

*Daily Parliament Times, 20 February 2024*

Kashmiri activists held large protest rallies against the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to 'occupied' Jammu and Kashmir, with a renewed commitment to carry on the struggle to overthrow Indian subjugation until its success. The protest was organized by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir (PHJK), an organization of post-1989 migrants from 'India occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK), on a bustling artery of state capital Muzaffarabad amid inclement weather. Participants who were holding black flags and banners marched from Ghari Pan Chowk to the district headquarters complex, while

chanting slogans like 'Go Modi Go Back' and 'Killer Killer, Modi Killer.'

Prominent among those who spoke on the occasion were PHJK chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, Muzaffarabad's Mayor Syed Sikandar Nisar Gilani, former president of Press Club Sohail Mughal and some other representatives of Kashmiri refugees. They said that Modi had been wickedly plotting to turn the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir into a minority by following in the footsteps of terrorist Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Modi is directly responsible for the dreadful war crimes committed in 'OJK' over the past nine years by 'India's occupational machinery' and Hindu fanatics, they claimed.

The speakers pointed out that the Modi government had thrown behind bars more than forty-three thousand Kashmiris over the past five years in a failed bid to crush the ongoing popular resistance movement in the occupied territory. The detainees included pro-freedom leaders and activists, journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers, students, businesspersons, and other members of Kashmiri society, they added. If Mr. Modi thinks that the Kashmiri people will accept him after he has divested them of statehood, identity, and homeland, he is living in a fool's paradise, they said, adding that Kashmiris could never forget the deep wounds inflicted on them by India for the last 76 years.

The speakers said that after the brutal actions of 5 August 2019, India wanted to consolidate the 'military occupation' of Jammu and Kashmir by constructing roads, tunnels, and railway tracks. It's aimed at augmenting its military might in the territory to perpetuate its occupation, the speakers said. They said that India had been stealing natural resources of Jammu and Kashmir, including lithium, wood, water, electricity, and precious minerals, and had also deprived the local people of all available employment opportunities. In an international city like Srinagar, power outages stretch for several hours, which speaks volumes about the farcical claims of development, they said.

Narendra Modi is trying to poison the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the name of development and prosperity, where domicile certificates have been issued to millions of Indian citizens as part of demographic engineering. The speakers claimed that the Rs 32 billion projects announced by Modi could not substitute a single drop of blood shed for the freedom of Kashmir and added that the Kashmiri people would never allow their state, identity, and homeland to be usurped. The speakers also vowed that around four million people of the liberated territory would also strengthen the resistance movement for early freedom of their oppressed brethren across the divide.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/02/20/rally-holds-to-condemn-killer-modis-visit-to-occupied-kashmir/>

## **KKH partially reopened as snow, and landslides disrupt life in GB**

*Dawn, 21 February 2024*

The Karakoram Highway (KKH) was partially reopened for traffic, while the Baltistan Road remained closed for the third consecutive day following heavy snowfall in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), an official source said. The Gilgit-Chilas section of KKH has been cleared for one-way traffic to restore the region's road connectivity with other parts of the country. The roads were closed due to landslides following heavy rain and snowfall. The debris of falling rocks and inches of snow at multiple locations left thousands of passengers stranded.

An official of the Skardu district administration told Dawn that the Baltistan Road couldn't be reopened at multiple locations due to heavy landslide. He said clearance work was underway at the highway, and it will be opened for traffic soon. Locals complained that work to reopen the road was progressing at a slow pace, thus hampering their daily life. Public Works Department Secretary Safdar Khan told Dawn that all inter-district roads and other link roads have been opened. Flights between Islamabad, Skardu, and Gilgit were also suspended with disruptions in electricity supply and mobile and internet connectivity.

The GB chief minister, Haji Gulbar Khan, has issued instructions to the region's Disaster Management

Authority, all divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, and administrative officers to be prepared for heavy rains and snowfall. After prolonged dry weather conditions, GB has started receiving snowfall and rain.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1815902/kkh-partially-reopened-as-snow-landslides-disrupt-life-in-gb>

## **Modi's Jammu visit akin to rubbing salt on Kashmiris' wounds: Rahmani**

*Pakistan Observer, 22 February 2024*

The All Party Hurriyat Conference- 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter senior leader, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani denounced the Indian PM Narendra Modi's recent visit to 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), termed it as rubbing salt into the wounds of the oppressed Kashmiris. Rahmani in a statement issued in Islamabad said that after illegally abrogating the special status of 'IIOJK' in 2019, Modi was hoodwinking the world into believing that peace and development had started during his tenure in the territory. He said India was making false claims of economic development in Kashmir by citing the construction of roads and railway lines, adding that, after destroying Kashmir's agriculture, horticulture, and economy, this all was being done for military purposes.

He said that Modi's Hindutva regime was terminating Kashmiri Muslim employees from govt services, making

many families suffer from poverty. He claimed that India was making efforts to turn the Muslim majority status of 'IOJK' into a minority by providing domicile certificates to non-locals. He said that lakhs of canals of Kashmir's land were in the possession of the Indian army whose huge presence had made the lives of the Kashmiri people a hell. He said that the Kashmiris' properties were being snatched and handed over to the Indian business tycoons, adding that privately owned madrassas and schools were being sealed and religious scholars including imams of mosques were being forced to toe the govt line.

<https://pakobserver.net/modis-jammu-visit-akin-to-rubbing-salt-on-kashmiris-wounds-rahmani/>

### **PML-N's Kashmir chapter hopeful of forming govt in 'AJK', Gilgit**

*Dawn, 22 February 2024*

Foreseeing the installation of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led governments in the center and Punjab, the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) chapter of PML-N claimed that the party would soon lead the governments in Muzaffarabad and Gilgit as well. A great political change is on the cards in the wake of the establishment of PML-N-led governments in the Centre and the largest province of Punjab which will not only send a positive message across the Line of Control but also help adopt a categorical stand at the international level regarding the ongoing freedom movement in 'Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) said PML-N's

regional president Shah Ghulam Qadir in a statement.

Mr. Qadir's statement came two days after the parliamentary party of the PTI forward bloc, which leads the coalition government in 'AJK', met in Kashmir House where, according to an official handout, 'some members expressed reservations about a political ally. Though the ally was not named in the handout, it was widely believed to be directed at the PML-N. In the earlier portion of his statement, Mr Qadir welcomed the understanding between the PML-N and PPP on the formation of government(s), believing that the move would bless the country with the much-needed economic and political stability.

The split mandate in the recent general elections had put the political leadership of both parties to the test but they have once again proved their high political insight by making wise decisions that will lead to the establishment of strong federal and provincial governments and subsequently strengthen democracy and bring economic and political stability in the country, he said. Mr Qadir alleged that PTI had plunged the country's economy into an abysmal state due to non-seriousness and incompetence. While weak economic conditions and inconsiderate and careless leadership provided India with an opportunity for the 'constitutional occupation' of 'OJK' on the one hand, attempts were also made to destroy the political atmosphere in the peaceful region of 'AJK' on the other, thus



multiplying the frustration of the Kashmiri nation, he said.

He asserted that the Sharif brothers had always kept Kashmir at the top of their priorities and he had no qualms about saying that residents of the liberated territory would equally benefit from peace, progress, and prosperity in Pakistan following the installation of PML-N governments in center and Punjab. Mr Qadir said the way the PML-N 'AJK' chapter workers, including Kashmiri refugees and 'AJK' domicile holders living in Pakistan, had enthusiastically participated in the recent elections for the success of their party was commendable and highly valued by the party leadership.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1816118/pml-ns-kashmir-chapter-hopeful-of-forming-govts-in-ajk-gilgit>

### **Hurriyat leaders, organisations demand an independent probe into the Kunan-Poshpora mass rape**

*Pakistan Observer, 23 February 2024*

In 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), the Hurriyat leaders and organizations have expressed deep regret that despite the passage of over three decades, victims of Kunan-Poshpura mass rape have not been provided justice. According to Kashmir Media Service, 'Indian troops had gang-raped around 100 women' of all ages from eight to eighty on the night of 23 February in 1991 during a siege and search operation in Kunan Poshpora area of Kupwara district. On the eve of Kunan Poshpora mass rape

tragedy, illegally detained Molvi Bashir Ahmad Irfani, Yasin Attai, Yasmeen Raja, Fahreeda Behanji, Gulam Nabi War, Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party leader Advocate Arshad Iqbal, Jammu and Kashmir National Front leader Muhammad Haseeb Wani and Kashmir Tehreek-e-Khawateen leader Ms. Hafiza Bano and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, Jammu, and Kashmir People's Freedom League in their statements issued in Srinagar today said that the tragic incident was a well-planned conspiracy hatched by the Indian authorities to keep the Kashmiri women away from the freedom struggle.

Paying tributes to the valiant Kashmiri women for their active participation and sacrifices in the freedom movement, the statements lamented that the Kashmiri women were the prime target of cowardly Indian forces and that they were not only killed, tortured, and imprisoned but raped also. The rape of women is used as a tool by the Indian troops to punish, humiliate and intimidate the Kashmiris into submission, they claimed. They said that being a vulnerable segment of society, the Kashmiri women had been the worst victims of Indian belligerence as the dreadful incident of Kunan and Poshpora mass rape showed.

Highlighting the pain and agony of the rape victims, they said that it was disgusting to see that the Indian rulers and their henchmen in the territory have shamelessly tried to cover up and conceal the facts to save the bloody culprit troops who were directly

involved in this beastly act. The brutality Kashmiri women were subjected to on the dreadful night of 23 February 1991 finds no place in human history while despite the passage of 33 years, justice continues to elude the victims, the statements added. The Hurriyat leaders and organizations said the use and abuse of power, harassment humiliation, and sexual abuse were among the dirtiest war tactics the Indian army has been using to suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination.

<https://pakobserver.net/hurriyat-leaders-orgs-demand-independent-probe-into-kunan-poshpora-mass-rape/>

## **Economic Developments**

### **Mangla power station: WAPDA proposes depositing Sales Tax to 'AJK'**

*Business Recorder, 19 February 2024*

The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has proposed the signing of a formal agreement between the stakeholders to deposit the Sales Tax (ST) amount of Mangla Power Station to 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) exchequer. Recently, a notification was issued regarding the formation of a Technical Committee in pursuance of the decision of the Combined Sub-Committee held on 30 January 2024 to deliberate and finalise their recommendations on/ before 31 January 2024 for placing before the Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting. WAPDA argues that apropos to the

Technical Committee meeting held on 31 January 2024, the office of General Manager Finance (Power) received the minutes of the meeting of the Technical Committee held on 01 February 2024 through WAPDA representative who was nominated to attend the Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting.

The recommendations communicated through the minutes of the meeting are as follows: (i) WAPDA will start filing monthly sales returns with 'AJK' Inland Revenue Department with effect from January 2024, and deposit the due sales tax amount for Mangla Power Station to 'AJK' exchequer; (ii) WAPDA will issue supply invoices to Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) declaring bifurcated figures of value of supplies and sales tax amount in respect of 'AJK' and Pakistan and there will be no need of issuing separate tax invoices; and (iii) the modalities regarding payment of Sales Tax in 'AJK' will be agreed between WAPDA authorities and 'AJK' Inland Revenue Department within a week.

WAPDA maintains that some procedures need to be followed before this can be implemented as some issues have to be considered properly before putting the mechanism in place. According to WAPDA, during the discussion, no cut-off/ effective date had been agreed. The given timeline of January 2024 for filling the Sales Tax Return and depositing the due sales tax amount for Mangla Power Station to 'AJK' exchequer is not possible practically without taking on board the other stakeholders.

WAPDA further conveyed to the Federal Board of Revenue of Pakistan (FBR) that it will issue supply invoices to CPPA-G declaring bifurcated figures of value of supplies and sales tax amount in respect of 'AJK' and Pakistan and there will be no need to issue separate tax invoices. However, the input of CPPA- G is required. General Manager Finance (Power) WAPDA Syed Irfan Hussain Rizvi argued that the modalities regarding 'payment of Sales Tax in 'AJK' without legal sanctions among stakeholders, for instance, WAPDA authorities, FBR and 'AJK' Inland Revenue Department and CPPA-G and the timeline thereof need to be linked with the Agreement among the stakeholders.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40289508/mangla-power-station-wapda-proposes-depositing-st-with-ajk>

### **High-level meeting on land reforms chaired by GB Chief Minister**

*Urdupoint, 19 February 2024*

Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Haji Gulbar Khan while presiding over a high-level meeting about land reforms said that the land issue will be resolved by the preferences of the people and that the Land Reforms Act will include the community members and that the customs and traditions of the region will play a crucial part in the land reforms. He stressed that soon, legislation about land reforms will be passed, providing a permanent solution to the province's long-standing land issues. The chairman of

the Forum of Initiatives and Changes GB, Amjad Hussain Advocate, provided a briefing during the meeting on the need and significance of land reforms. He stated that advancing the livestock and agriculture industries is one of the province government's top priorities.

He said that facilities and contemporary technologies will be made available to farmers and dairy farmers. Farmers will receive state-of-the-art equipment through public-private partnerships. The Department of Agriculture's research program will be enhanced and broadened and that lands will be zoned to support the agriculture industry. He noted that a suitable amount of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the upcoming year will go toward the agricultural sector and that to encourage the growing of wheat, various facilities will be availed to the farmers.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/gilgit/national-news/live-news-3920921.html>

### **The Struggles of Shimshal: Balancing Rumors, Mining, and Reality!**

*Pamir Times, 21 February 2024*

Before diving into the subject I would like my readers to read a small story about mining. In a prosperous kingdom, a tantalizing rumor circulated among the people, claiming a hidden treasure within the highest hill. The ambitious king, captivated by the idea, became convinced of its existence. Fueled by this belief, he

forcibly seized the area and committed the kingdom's resources and labor to excavate the hill in search of the elusive treasure. Tragically, the endeavor proved catastrophic, leading to the loss of hundreds of lives in accidents during the extensive mining operations.

Over five long years, the king's obsession with the rumored treasure drained the kingdom's coffers. The once-flourishing land now bore the scars of relentless digging, as the laborers shifted the entire hill in their quest. However, the anticipated reward remained elusive, and the kingdom found itself on the brink of financial ruin. The king's unwavering faith in the rumor had led his people down a path of destruction, leaving them with nothing to show for their sacrifices. As the truth unfolded, the king faced the harsh reality that the treasure was a mere figment of imagination. The kingdom, battered and impoverished, grappled with the consequences of the misguided pursuit. The once-wealthy ruler now faced the daunting task of rebuilding not only the kingdom's economy but also the shattered trust of his people who had suffered immeasurable losses in the pursuit of a nonexistent fortune.

In the remote village of Shimshal, nestled in the heart of Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), a cloud of rumors has enveloped the region, hinting at untold treasures of minerals and gold hidden within its boundaries. Private mining groups misguided by their local brokers, driven by the allure of potential riches, have secured

exploration leases from the Mineral Department, fueled by a fervor that overlooks the need for rigorous research or laboratory testing of the alleged minerals. The authorities swayed by these unverified claims, now stand poised to unlock the supposed wealth in Shimshal, regardless of the cost. This fervent pursuit has raised concerns, particularly given that the leased area is situated on the upper stream of the village, at the confluence of the Yazghil and Khurdopin glaciers.

The fast-melting glaciers are not only a critical subject of global concern, studied by organizations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), and other environmental groups but also vital to the sustainability of life in the region. Let's not forget that the outburst of Verjerav Lake Shimshal several times in history has washed away the entire valley up to Gilgit. For over a millennium, the resilient villagers of Shimshal have called this remote outpost home. Despite facing numerous challenges, including the absence of a proper road that took 18 years of voluntary efforts to establish, they have persevered. The basic facilities that most take for granted, such as a reliable road network, are yet to be provided by the government.

Now, the local administration finds itself caught between the pressures from higher authorities to pursue an unrealistic dream based on mere rumors and the genuine needs and

concerns of the community. The story of Shimshal is a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between economic aspirations and environmental stewardship. As the world grapples with the consequences of resource exploitation, the people of Shimshal find themselves at the crossroads, torn between the allure of potential riches and the need to protect their pristine surroundings and centuries-old way of life. In this struggle, the voices of the villagers, their history, and their commitment to preserving the environment must not be overshadowed by the unchecked pursuit of a rumored fortune.

<https://pamirtimes.net/2024/02/20/the-struggles-of-shimshal-balancing-rumors-mining-and-reality/>

### **NICL offers to Assume Financial Risks of 'AJK' State-owned Assets**

*Daily Parliament Times, 22 February 2024*

A high-level joint meeting of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) government and the state-run National Insurance Company Ltd (NICL) reaching a consensus on the importance of effective risk management and the role of NICL in safeguarding the assets of the 'AJK' government. The Chief Secretary of 'AJK' government Dawood Muhammad Barech, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) Khalid Hamid, signal a significant step towards strengthening the partnership between NICL and the 'AJK' government, ensuring the protection of state-owned assets and enhancing

overall financial resilience. The meeting was also attended by Zafar Mehmood, Secretary of Services and General Administration Department (SGAD), Communication and Works Department (CWD), and Chairman Central Board of Revenue (CBR).

The agenda of the meeting centered on NICL's role as the leading state-owned insurance provider and its willingness to assume the financial risks associated with both movable and immovable assets owned by the Government of 'AJK.' During the meeting, Mr. Hamid highlighted NICL's status as a state-owned entity that is entirely owned by the Government of Pakistan and operating under the administrative control of the Ministry of Commerce. Since its inception in 1976, NICL has been providing comprehensive coverage to vital, strategic, and sensitive assets.

He also discussed the legal framework of governing business in 'AJK.' It was noted that the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, which has been adopted by the 'AJK' Government through the 'AJK' Insurance (Adaptation and Extension of Functions) Act, 2007, mandates that all insurance businesses relating to public property, or any associated risks must be placed with NICL exclusively. Additionally, the enactment of 'Act IV of 1986' by the 'AJK' government further empowers NICL to transact business within the region.

Expressing appreciation for NICL's commitment to assuming the financial risks of state-owned assets, the 'AJK'

Chief Secretary reiterated the importance of compliance with all relevant legislation. He directed the state departments, state-owned entities, and autonomous bodies to transfer their financial risks to NICL, emphasizing the benefits this would bring to the 'AJK' government in terms of financial stability and asset protection. The Chief Secretary directed the Additional Chief Secretary Ms. Midhat Shahzad for the orientation session for secretaries of many departments with NICL.

<https://www.dailyparliamenttimes.com/2024/02/22/nicl-offers-to-assume-financial-risks-of-ajk-state-owned-assets/>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

#### **GB's constitutional status must be determined: Agha Ali**

*Dailyk2, 20 February 2024*

Syed Ali Rizvi, the province president of Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM), stated that determining Gilgit-Baltistan's (GB) constitutional status is the most urgent need of the hour. According to him, the enemy country will benefit from the prolonged deliberations of the ruling class on GB's constitutional status, as they have been delaying the decision for a long time. We want to be represented in both the parliament and the National Finance Commission (NFC). Our movement is the only one of its kind fighting for a just and equal world, and the institutions ought to take our concerns and demands into consideration.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/20427>

#### **Mass protests and rallies across 'AJK' against PM Modi's visit to 'Occupied Kashmir'**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 21 February 2024*

Black Day was marked by the people throughout 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), against the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), to express strong protest and outrage against India. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and the 'AJK' government called for protests on both sides of the Line of Control to inform the international community of Kashmiris' dislike towards New Delhi and the 'illegal occupation' of Jammu and Kashmir by India using the might of its armed forces. In addition to 'occupied Kashmir' and the rest of the world, hundreds of people from all walks of life, including social and political workers, business people, lawyers, journalists, employees of governmental and non-governmental organizations, NGOs, students, teachers, and human rights activists, flocked to the streets this morning to participate in the protest rally commemorating Black Day.

Speakers at the protest rally held at the District Court premises included the president of the District Bar Association, Deputy Mayor Ramzan Chughtai, Deputy Commissioner Ch. Yasir Riaz, and City Mayor Ch. Usman Ali, among other prominent figures

from the civil society. They strongly denounced the ongoing 'forcible occupation' of the majority of Jammu and Kashmir by India, using the might of her one million 'occupying military and para-military troops' in the 'IOJK.' The speakers went on to claim that the people of Jammu and Kashmir had made enormous sacrifices for a just cause and would keep up this spirit and high moral standards till their liberation struggle was achieved. The widespread violations of human rights carried out by the 'Indian occupying forces' in Kashmir were strongly denounced by them.

Speakers urged the UN to punish India severely for abandoning the diplomatic process to resolve the long-overdue, internationally recognized Kashmir dispute. To avoid additional delay and enable the convening of a plebiscite in the State under UN auspices to settle the Kashmir dispute, speakers encouraged India to promptly remove its forces from 'OJK.' In addition to the capital city of Muzaffarabad, there were demonstrations and processions against PM Modi's visit to 'occupied Jammu', in Kotli, Bagh, Bhimber, Rawalakot, Haveli, and Sudhanoti districts, as well as tehsil headquarters. These incidents acted as a vehicle for expressing Kashmiris' deep animosity toward New Delhi and their demand for total separation from India.

<https://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Resize-of-FRONT-PAGE-21.jpg>

### **Prime Minister of 'AJK' denounced the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'IOJK'**

*Urdu point, 21 February 2024*

The visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (OJK) was denounced by Chaudhry Anwar Haq, the prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK). He claimed that the worst fascism of the Modi government and Indian state institutions persists in 'OJK' even after Article 370 and 35A were terminated. The Indian government and its affiliated institutions are making vain attempts to deceive the international community by disseminating spurious information about purported development initiatives and fictitious public assemblies in 'occupied Kashmir.' He alleged that during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an unannounced curfew has been implemented in 'OJK'. He said that the Indian pretense of lies will be destroyed and that we will resolutely oppose Modi's fascism and refuse to abandon the people of 'OJK'.

The Hurriyat leadership's nonviolent campaign for freedom deserves recognition from the entire globe, and international human rights organizations should provide reliable information to the world about the conditions in 'OJK.' The Modi government is involved in forced disappearances, demographic shifts, language divide, religious restrictions,

and the exploitation of democratic norms. The region may become unstable as a result of India's expansionist activities, the prime minister warned. There is a plot to conceal from the international community the everyday deteriorating human rights situation in 'OJK', as evidenced by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the region. Due to racial and religious discrimination, the Modi administration has made life in 'OJK' extremely difficult for its citizens.

He rejected the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to 'OJK', and declared that Modi's pro-Hindutva agenda will not be permitted to continue. He said that India needs to cease spreading fake information that portrays the 'occupied valley' as being ideal. He urged the United Nations to act against India and carry out the pledge of a plebiscite in response to India's unilateral, expansionist, and biased activities.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3923670.html>

### **India is using Kashmiri women's dignity as a weapon of war: Speakers at a Seminar**

*UrduPoint, 22 February 2024*

Speakers at a seminar in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) capital city of Muzaffarabad claimed that India was stifling the Kashmiri people's drive for independence by using the humiliation of women as a war weapon. The

seminar was conducted by the International Forum for Justice in honor of the Kunan Poshpora Massacre's 33rd anniversary. Deputy Chairman of the Forum Mushtaq-ul-Islam presided over the seminar at Higher Secondary School Soheli Sarkar, with 'AJK' Minister Imtiaz Naseem serving as the chief guest. Director of the Liberation Cell, Raja Sajad Latif Khan, Vice Chairman of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Usman Ali Hashim, Principal of the Higher Secondary School Amira Yusuf, Leader of the Muslim Conference, Samia Sajid, leader of the PML-N Women Wing, Saira Chishti, Maira Khan, among others also gave speeches on the occasion.

According to speakers, despite all forms of duress from India, Kashmiri women continue to fight for their freedom and remain firm like a rock. They claimed that the husbands, sons, and brothers of Kashmiri women who gave up their dignity for the cause of liberation also perished. The speakers added that even after 33 years, the guilty Indian soldiers are still at large and that justice has not been served to the victims of the horrific Kunan Poshpora. The speakers praised the courageous women of the 'occupied Kashmir' who are making huge sacrifices for freedom, like Syeda Asia Andrabi, Fahmida Sufi, and other captive women from Kashmir.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3924694.html>



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**Disclaimer**

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